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Feeling and Being at the (postcolonial) Museum: presencing the affective politics of 'race' and culture.

Postcolonialism, affect and race at the museum

As a cultural geographer, my thinking through race and culture at the space of the museum is informed by a spatially and temporally situated account of the ways in which racialized cultures are encountered and refigured in the everyday. Most importantly, the focus here is on '(W)hat happens when the racialized 'other' encounters themselves in the museum cabinet? On this research path, I do not separate the writings of Stuart Hall and Nigel Thrift as *sociological* or *geographical* respectively. However there is a useful dialogue to be had *between* cultural geographers working on affect (without a concern for race and power) and sociologists working on race as a category of difference (without consideration of spatial theory). My practice has been informed by bringing these *ouuvres* together.. Ahmed (2002) has argued, affective charges are at the heart of everyday culture and life, including racisms. At the forefront of the research then is a question of thinking 'race' at sites where it is perhaps elided, being positioned in postcolonial terms, as 'other'; reified, timeless (Hall, 1996) and outside of modernity (Gilroy, 1993). The paper is neither privileging a *deep* account of material culture nor indeed is it an evaluation of museum as *civic laboratory* (Bennett, 2005). Power, postcolonialism and race form the cornerstones of my analysis, which highlights the geographies of affect and emotion at the museum cabinet. Geography, has a strong self-critique of its role in imperialist expansion and governance (Driver, 2001). It also engages with radical postcolonial interventions (Noxolo *et al.* 2008; Raghuram *et. al.* 2009; Noxolo, 2009; Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010). Despite these accounts, areas of the discipline remain untouched by reflections on race and power,

including accounts of *affect* as a driver of cultural economies (Thien, 2005; Tolia-Kelly, 2006).

Within sociology, Bhamra (2007, see also Rodriguez *et al* 2010) has recently articulated the discipline has failed to engage with postcolonialism thus evading the opportunity to reflect on its emergence as a discipline within imperial time-space. ‘(T)he postcolonial revolution, then, points to what is missing in sociology: an engagement with difference that makes a difference to what was initially thought.’ (p877). Similarly, in Meer and Nayak’s (2013) review of the place of “race” in *Sociology* they argue that ‘there is a perception that there is less sociology dedicated to the study of race today than there was two decades ago (2013: 1). There perhaps has been reluctance to reflect on racist ideologies as embedded in institutional and disciplinary practices (Hall, 1992; Smith, 1999), including its relationship with science and the biopolitics of race (Skinner, 2007). Amin (2012) also reminds us of the ways in which neoliberal accounts of a post-racial society, conceal racism and make racist experiences impossible to articulate (see Harries, 2014). This paper addresses the questions of “race” that echo in our national spaces of culture, namely the national museum. “Race is deliberately presented here, in the everyday, exemplifying how differences based on “culture” have become a way of avoiding ‘race’ (Fortier, 2007; 2008; 2010; Gilroy, 2013; Gilroy, 1993). The museum is regarded here as a site where feelings about others as “others” materialise in a particular geometry of power relations; it is no longer a *neutral* site of display (Stocking, 1985). The museum cabinet, viewed through a postcolonial lens, exposes the continuities of imperial taxonomies and hierarchies of culture that underpin its use. The result is an encounter with colonial cultures of epistemic violence and subjugation, sanctioned in the present. The museum space thus operates as a *theatre of pain*. As Pieterse (1997: 124) has argued, ‘(P)ostcoloniality unsettles ethnographic museums’. The feeling of being Māori at the museum cabinet, is a moment of

enlivening an encounter with “race”; enlivened, embodied and “felt”. Waterton and Watson (2013: 552) call us to think heritage sites beyond being positioned as static *texts* to be read. Heritage is seen as emergent from ‘the feelings of being, becoming and belonging’. Affective politics can be a force to disrupt imperial orderings and “ways of seeing”; a counterpoint to imperial logics (Bennett, 2005).

Postcolonial writing (W.E.B Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1968; Said, 1979; Spivak, 1988) is elemental to examining everyday affective encounters at the museum, where there are narratives of race, underlying museum cultures (Bennett, 2013; Sylvester, 2009). In collaboration with the artist Rosanna Raymondⁱ, the paper attempts to critique the residues of colonial hierarchies of cultures, and the racisms underpinning them. The capacities for sensibilities have been a way of categorising cultures within the hierarchies of civilisation. These imperial categories are figured through the technologies (Bennett, 2005) such as the museum cabinet, which continues to re-frame Māori culture as “other” to both European sensibilities and modernity itself. Rosanna Raymond and the London Māori community Ngāti Rānanaⁱⁱ are considered here as the voices through which we can evaluate the emotional, visceral effects of exhibiting Māori taonga at the museum space, to them as Māori visitors.

Raymond has been invited to re-curate Māori collections in residencies throughout Europeⁱⁱⁱ including at the British Museum, London. The core mission of our collaboration is embedded in the feminist project of *situating knowledges* (Rose, 1997) with the aim of producing knowledge that is situated in a research practice which is co-produced by a cultural geographer and an artist-curator who is both critical and embedded within museum praxis. The collaboration is about being reflexive, and situating the argument

outside of an assumed *universal* academic lens, but situated through an anti-imperial gaze embodied in Raymond's art and identity. This research project has sought to articulate, and to co-visualize the dialogue between technologies of representation and Māori visitors. Telling a counter-story is at the heart of Raymond's approach, which embodies an anti-archival practice (De Nardi, 2014a, 2014b). Its purpose is also to outline the tension between a re-iteration of colonial violence of negation, erasure and deterministic narrative and their circulation which coalesce as affective charges within the spaces of the museum. The Māori galleries at the British Museum are a space, not of enlightenment, but of a divestment from Māori heritage. The divestment occurs doubly, through misrepresentation, and the re-affirming of imperial narrative accounts. The project aims to situate the affective experience of epistemic violence that Māori encounter when seeing their culture through the space of the museum. The collaboration has developed through conversations, joint performances and has brought to light a strategy for dissemination in art, text and expressive culture. Small modest steps ensue; in the space of a paper, a catalogue, an event that shifts the ground. Postcolonial practice here is about undermining the time-space frame of imperialism. The tension between the two exposes the mistruths of representation. The affective politics of Māori space-time subdue the power of the imperial "way of seeing" to a connection with sensibilities that are not chronological but shot through and co-constituted within the "structures of feelings" within modernity.

Smith's (1999) account of colonising knowledges asks us to be mindful of the politics of being "authentic", "native", "insider" or indeed speaking on behalf of "others". However in our aim through collaboration is to be more-than-representational of the everyday politics of racializing by acknowledging the particularity of our view and experience of the museum. Smith argues that "'intellectuals" who position themselves as "post-colonial" move across boundaries of indigenous, and metropolitan, institution and

community, politics and scholarship. Their place in the academy is still highly problematic' (1999: 71); as geographers, anthropologists and sociologists, we are doubly implicated as 'research' has been positioned as a tool that serves Empire, and one which defines 'others. There is a double-bind of innovating decolonising ways of researching "culture" which are then criticised for being amateur. Here, a postcolonial critical narrative of the museum space, is situated, embodied and indeed articulates the affective postcolonial *positioning* (Hall, 1996) of Māori as expressed in the museum space.

Theatres of Pain

Theatres of pain was originally a performance, an exploration of post-imperial affective politics at the twenty-first century museum, performed by Rosanna Raymond and myself at the inaugural conference of the *Association of Critical Heritage Studies*, Gothenburg, in 2012. Using this account, the exhibition space of the national museum is seen here to be experienced as a *theatre of pain*. The museum acts as a site that materialises the pain of epistemic violence, the rupture of genocide and the deadening of artefacts. Petrification (as Bennett, 2006) here, is considered as operating along racial lines. The effect is to experience an atmosphere of loss, guilt, sadness and anger concretised along geometries of imperial power.

The art of art practice is to move us and jolt us out of our habits of seeing, encouraging us to "feel" a new interpretation. Postcolonial expressive cultures have also incorporated the project of making us feel, in empathy with the voice and body of the postcolonial subject (see Morrison et al., 2013; Mercer, 2008). The presence of bodies of the "other" effectively destabilise the technologies of racialization, including tropes of "victimage" or "savage". The experience is articulated through Raymond's art and her "voice" is one which resonates in the work of Ngāti Rānana as the London Māori

community participating in new curatorial articulations and ceremonies at the British Museum. For Raymond, inhabiting the space of the violated ancestors enables the eradication of the structures perpetuating these violations. Presencing the hauntings of peoples who have been misrepresented, and determined as fixed, through their assumed affective capacities are embedded in her account. The museum does not recognise Māori scholars as “experts” and thus misrepresentation and exclusionary practices continue to compound feelings of alienation. Māori scholars are positioned “outside” of elite academic circles of anthropology and archaeology; cast as an inexpert other. Thus the cabinet reiterates the imperial practice of disabling “self-iteration” and self-determination. Raymond has tackled definitions of Māori identity by promoting accounts of the Pacific or Polynesian-ness (counter to narrow understandings of Māori) promoted in her art activism (2011; 2003), and through co-curated exhibitions (Salmond, 2008). Raymond argues that:

To read about yourself labelled as hybrid and having your authenticity questioned by people outside your community left me feeling disempowered. I was often frustrated at the many mistakes and misrepresentation that appeared in articles, especially by peoples who had spent very little or no time, with us or within our community. Often our involvement as practitioners was welcomed but our analysis of what we were doing was not considered as important unless validated by an educated expert.”(2012: 153)

Feminist writers on affect (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b; Thien, 2005; Hemmings, 2005; *Author A*), have critiqued the occlusion of power and and argued that any “universalist” account of experience risks ethnocentrism by default. Araeen (1987) and Sylvester (2009) have framed the consideration of affect and emotion at the museum from the perspective of the subaltern. There search poses the problematics of experiencing the gallery space by people who are from communities exhibited within the cabinets and galleries (see also Golding, 2009). Here, I propose thinking Māori visitors’ encounter with exhibits at the British Museum beyond the usual affective registers such as awe, wonder and the sublime

in order to articulate how the museum space is experienced. Inspired by Samuel's (1994) "theatres of memory", museums serve as formal sanctioned spaces of memory which, due to their exclusionary space-time, become locations of suffering; *theatres of pain*. Curatorial frameworks termed as "authorised heritage discourses" (Waterton et. al, 2006) engender affective responses. For Māori visitors, including those from the London Māori community, Ngāti Rānana, pain, alienation and grief are the affective and emotional registers through which the Māori galleries are encountered. The Māori experience expresses discordancy between how Māori "feel" their cultural heritage to be and the continuing resonances of imperial ways of framing, seeing and exhibiting "other" cultures. It has long been argued that there is a need to take postcolonial critique beyond the textual realm, and need to be refigured through gender (McClintock, 2013) and race (Dwyer and Bressey, 2008). Here, postcolonial thinking illustrates the ways in which the affective and emotional space of the museum is experienced not through interracial encounter, but as encounters with "self" as "other".

The visceral encounter within a spatial realm (in this case, the museum space) is considered alongside recent non-representational conceptualizations of affective atmospheres (McCormack, 2008; Kraftl and Adey, 2008; Adey, 2008; Anderson, 2009; Stephens, 2015), to extend thinking about the politics of "other" cultures and race thinking. In these affective engagements in the museum space, there is a critical need to think cross-, trans- intra- and inter-culturally (Waterton and Dittmer, 2014). Affect and emotion co-constitute the remnants of imperialist ways of seeing 'other worlds, peoples and places' (Said, 1979: 93). Critically, they can be instrumental in producing a post-imperial curatorship and stewardship (see also Bohrer, 1994).

Cross-Cultural Affects

Scholars working on cross-cultural contexts have engaged with affect and emotion at the museum. Schorch (2013; 2014) reframes possibilities for new cosmopolitanisms, and others highlight how cumulative affects (see Dewan and Hackett, 2009) are important in developing a race-sensitive pedagogy (Gregory and Witcomb, 2007; Witcomb, 2013). Their thinking about affective presence through technologies of display open up a space for postcolonial critique (e.g. Boehner et al, 2005; Coombes, 1994; Herle, 2005), beyond the textual. (, Affect works at various levels in the spaces of heritage, informing reflections on the contribution of heritage spaces to the production and consolidation of national identity and sensibilities at heritage sites (*Author A*). Or, indeed, affect can facilitate historical understanding of traumatic events (see Waterton and Dittmer, 2014). As Thrift has argued, ‘affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world which can sense different things even though they cannot always be named’ (2004: 60). Geographically, the value of emotion and affect in these spaces is critical in shaping heritage encounters, producing alternative pedagogies, evoking counter-narratives, and developing self-determined accounts of cultural heritage. The affective, it is argued, is transpersonal, interpersonal and engenders political events (Thrift, 2004) in the everyday (Pile, 2010). McCormack (2008) and Bissell (2009) promote the idea of affective atmospheres as a way of conceptualising a collective evocation conjured up in everyday life. This account of affective atmospheres is thus taken up to illustrate motivations for political action rooted in Marx ([1856] cited in Anderson 2009), and translated into economies (Thrift, 2004) and national sensibilities (Stephens, 2015).

Affective atmospheres are everywhere and coalesce in the spaces of heritage. It could be argued that heritage spaces are material precipitates of affective memories at the scales of nation and world. Affective atmospheres ‘are the shared ground from which subjective states and their attendant feelings and emotions emerge’ (Anderson, 2009: 78). What is at

stake here is the risk of thinking of experience, or collectivities of feeling as emerging from a *singularised* “shared” account. Situating affect as figured through power and race, is the work of postcolonial thinking. Here, it is imperative to remember that *affective atmosphere* is not a new framing logic of everyday experiences of the colonised (Fanon, 1968), racialised (Hall, 1997a,b; 2005) and oppressed. Postcolonial writers in art-history have argued that migration is a powerful sensibility through which we can re-think outdated axiomatic distinctions when defining art and artefact. In this account, both artefacts and Māori visitors are in motion, their meanings, and identities are reformed through mobility. Māori visitors in their very presence can help to ‘transcend ethnocentric parochialism’ (Mercer, 2008: 15) that characterise cultural taxonomies sedimented and removed from the social realm.

Exhibiting “Other” Cultures

Baxandall (1991: 34) argues that ‘it is not possible to exhibit other cultures without putting a construction upon them’. There is no value-free act of cultural representation. This point is further complicated by W.E.B. Du Bois’s (1903) argument that many visitors and communities face a dilemma when entering a space of “national” or “international” culture, where they are not figured. Often racialised communities experience the heritage space as an alienating one. Feelings of seeing yourself as “other” combined with the lack of power to rewrite the representation result in needing to be able to operate with a double sensibility; one that is sanctioned and one that is not. Thus co-constituted narratives are needed to disturb hegemonic formats (Bennett, 1995, 2005). An appreciation of the double-consciousness operating for racialised communities disrupts the idealised texture of atmosphere as “shared ground” that is available to all. It is important to state that the where

work with communities has been engaged with the dominant discourse remains undisturbed. As Waterton and Smith argue (2010: 7):

As it stands, the heritage sector is dominated by a particular notion of community, one that overlooks the fact that representations of reality can have powerful effects... (i)t can lead to misrecognition, discrimination, lowered self-esteem and lack of parity in any engagement with heritage. This discourse shapes reality, both by mystifying and naturalising existing power relations.

Even when we consider recent exhibitions such as Pacific Encounters (2008) where Māori artists and community were involved, the objectification of the “other” continues as a dominant thread. Correna (2009:176) states that ‘it shows how endlessly fascinated people are by other people, by the objects they make and keep, and by the stories these objects tell of other times, places, and cultures.’

There is a history and materiality to the affective atmospheres that emerge at the encounter at the museum. These affective atmospheres accumulate through the ages and thus it is necessary to conceptualise the depth of subjugation, denial, and violence experienced therein. This “dysphoria” is simultaneously compounded by the very lack of voice, power or indeed righteousness of articulating one’s own cultural story or archive (Spivak, 1988). The experience of seeing one’s culture through another, results in a veil, a prism of trauma, anxiety and alienation. Feeling “alienated” challenges the usual articulations of “other” cultures as sensual, *in-situ* beings. The expected constellations of feelings that form the spectrum of responses to the museum narrative implode with the articulation of the postcolonial politics of what it is to be racialised or “other” in the space. This is not to say that the “unity” of an account of Māori sensibilities demonstrates an essential texture to the Māori museum experience; as Smaje (citing Asad, 1990) states ‘a unified culture is not

without contradictions. . . but is something to be demonstrated, not made into an essential truth about culture per se' (1997: 322).

What is certain is that postcolonial affective encounters help to co-produce museum spaces as hybrid, neither figured as “native” or “universalist”(Smith, 1999). Witcomb (2013, 2014) articulates the value of affect in the museum encounter to develop historical consciousness. Affect can promote a critical engagement towards history that is conscientiously postcolonial and plural without being prescriptive. Witcomb (2013) has further argued that this critical historical consciousness can challenge parochial nostalgia to include a feeling for counter-histories and counter-memories (2013: 255). By garnering inclusive sensibilities, affect becomes part of new strategies of interpretation (2013: 246) and can productively enable reconciliation between all citizens (2013: 257). The possibilities for Australian museums are, in theory, better as they engage with ‘indigenous peoples and their cultures and histories (as) part of the nation rather than as anthropological object’ (2013: 258). Witcomb outlines the problems of revising representational frameworks in museums through affect to re-adjust accounts of the past and the lines of inclusion to inclusive national citizenry.

In the British Museum

‘When I went away from my base culture the museum all of a sudden became a place where I knew that I could find parts of our history. I was quite shocked actually of how little we're represented. Knowing how many of our cultural treasures are in these places – let's take the British Museum for example. I knew that they had one of the biggest collections of pacific island cultural treasures in the world. . . So you can imagine how I was quite overwhelmed with how little we are represented. Then I realised that they were all in the storerooms.’
(Raymond personal interview, 19/08/2015)

Exhibitionary technologies have been the site of several critiques of the museum as a powerful space of discipline. The museum becomes a tool of governmentality; a space through which citizens are *made* (Bennett, 2005). What is seen, what is not; and how it is displayed produces *absences* and *presences* in cultural histories. These critiques have focused on the people flowing through as absorbers of ideas, values and “ways of seeing” (Berger, 2008) other cultures (Said, 1979). This section will focus on the work that the museum cabinet does when presencing and displaying Māori cultures. Macdonald (1988) has argued that difference and identity are fundamental to the “work” of the museum case. The cabinet deftly “cases-in” an account of a culture which can be juxtaposed to another. What emerge are the alignments of feelings that circulate as a result from Māori visitors, including artist and activist Rosanna Raymond. This account is distinct from superficial sensory responses with objects in a purely haptic register (Hetherington, 2003); these responses work in a different order. The museum cabinet is a legacy of an era of taxonomy and display of exemplars of categories, types, genus and indeed “races”. We deduce and categorise from an overview, a knowing gaze. By seeing them in the cabinet, these objects are at once knowable. In museum contact one never faces oneself in the cabinet, but rather, the glass encases the material cultures of culturally reified and objectified “others”. Alpers (1991), argues that the ‘tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus transform it into art like our own’ is the *museum effect* that orchestrates a particular *way of seeing*. Artefacts are thus “severed” from their original *situatedness* in a display that privileges the *sight* of them. The visual supersedes the feel texture and context (see Edwards et. al., 2006), creating an art-object rather than positioning the artefact within grammars of everyday life. It is the curator that judges against a universal palate (Alpers, 1991: 4). Museums need to enfranchise populations to

include the value of artefacts in the communities from which they come. Thus Raymond argues for a “living dynamic” to take seriously Māori values and knowledge:

Without the living dynamic what you see in the gallery are just inanimate objects. I'm a true believer in having a living dynamic and I've seen it and I've felt it and smelled it when the living reconnect with these Taonga. That's where you get, I mean, it's not magic, but it inspires people to be creative themselves. It is very different than when you are just staring into a case. That has been my issue with many exhibitions. If you just have a gallery, a bit of glass and objects - for me when the artists come in we help transcend that barrier and we take the art out of the space and back into the streets, and then off it goes again in another little cycle. (Raymond and Jacobs, 2009: 130)

To consider how these ways of seeing work, it is important to think about exhibitionary practices and communication of knowledge about Māori in the British Museum. In the Māori galleries, jade has been selected as a very important signifier of Māori heritage.

INSERT FIGURE 1 SOMEWHERE NEAR HERE

Figure 1: [Front Cover] *The Māori Collections of the British Museum* (2010). Edited by D.C Starzecka, R. Neich and M. Pendergrast. British Museum Press: London

The gaze onto the objects in the collections is examined further. The front-cover image of the British Museum textbook, *The Māori Collections of the British Museum* (see Figure 2.1), highlights a piece of jade with no information on maker, use, name or indeed temporal or spatial era. The object is without context, removed from a network of cultural values. “Ecological Thinking” (Code, 2006) is missing in the systems of naming and categorizations of cultural objects; these are termed epistemic violences. These are compounded by the ways in which we are conditioned to see “other” cultures. When you

look at an object, what do you see? Here, jade, is the signifying object. Rather than having a biography (Gell, 1998) or indeed an everyday life, it becomes a signifier of myth, reductive and supporting easily recognizable messages about Māori culture. The object becomes a metaphor for Māori society and perhaps “nation”. Furthermore, the object signifies the place of Māori in the universalizing aesthetic palate; it is seen as exemplifying the possibilities of Māori culture. In a post-colonial reading, the object articulates Māori as embodying particular sensibilities, poetics, and cultural capacities. Our gaze then mirrors the violences of the coloniser’s value system. Māori are ethnographically represented, through skirts, jade and cloaks and their story is written from the outside. And so, Māori space-time collapses in deference to universal space-time. The western gaze fixes meaning and associations within an epistemic framework that is recognisable. Karp and Lavine argue that ‘no genre of museum has been able to escape the problems of exoticising and assimilating inherent in exhibiting other cultures’ (1991: 378). On looking at the object as a “western” citizen, the grammars of being, looking and knowing through the museum gaze is now a habit, a rhythm that we are familiar with and contestations are usually over aesthetics, space or indeed opportunity to gaze with the correct tools (Goodman, 1985). Even if we are “native” (Smith, 1999) we appreciate knowledge or texts through the eyes of colonialism. For Goodman (1985: 56):

Reverberations from a work may travel in cycles through our everyday environment, other works, and itself, again and again, with ever-changing effect. Works work by interacting with all our experience and all our cognitive processes in the continuing advancement of our understanding (1985: 57).

The gaze, however, gains a different possibility when it is embodied by Māori themselves looking onto Māori *taonga*. Reverberations of sadness, pain and anger are felt at once. The *taonga* are not mere objects to Māori but rather gods, ancestors with

biographies and potent spiritual power. Māori experience on seeing *Taonga* disrespectfully displayed, mislabelled or indeed exhibited suffers from the failure to take care of ancestral spirits responsibly^{iv}. The experience of seeing the museum display of *taonga*, thus framed, results in the deadening and desecrating of their cultural ancestors. Raymond has responded to these striations of pain, guilt and sadness in her aesthetic practice. She also challenges the positioning of the Māori as *savage*. In the poem below Raymond highlights the violence of labelling Māori art as “artefact” and the deadening effect of the cabinet, where *Taonga* are locked away from their true nature as enlivened and part of modernity and not pre-modernity.

The Silence of the Gods

A throng of gods

Assembled in silence

Accused of decadence

Offered out of deference

Emptied of resonance

Collected for reference

And now in idol consideration

Engaged in your estrangement

I gaze at you like a stranger

Enjoying your sing song

that fell on deaf ears

I give you my name

And you give me your number

To revive you

To revere you

Raymond demonstrates the resonances of Du Bois's (1903) double consciousness. Double-consciousness encapsulates the museum experience of the racialised "other". It is the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. One is constituted as existing outside modernity itself (Hall, 1997a; Gilroy, 1990, 1993, 2013) whilst living in it.

Subsequently, the museum space is produced through the rupture between the museological account of being human, and the experience of being human as "other" in relation to the western bodies represented. There is a fissure between that is yet unreconciled, a gap between the disenfranchised, displaced subject of the museum narrative and a wholly self-determined account of cultural identity. An ecological "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1979) is denied. Du Bois's conceptualization helps us understand the striations of affects including the pain of seeing Māori *Taonga* as they sit as body-parts, without integrity or as part of contemporary connection with Māori family and heritage. For Māori, removal from community circulation is like burying them; eroding

their power and value. The objects only have value as part of embodied rituals and practices within communities, in context.

Spivak suggests that for the “true” subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself - thus begging the question, ‘(W)ith what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?’ (1988: 27). At the museum, the seeing of your culture as “other” is alienating because it is framed within an imperial taxonomy (Hall, 1997a) which denies historical dynamism, heterogeneity but, most importantly, self-determination (Said, 1979). To self-determine subaltern culture in a post-imperial world is to negotiate from a position of alienation, where, ‘[i]n the constitution of “Other” in Europe, great care was taken to obliterate the textual ingredients with which such a subject could cathect, could occupy (invest) its itinerary’ (Spivak, 1988 p.24).

Powerful affective charges emerge from this situated *doubleness*. At the museum, there is a joy and awe at seeing Māori *Taonga*, being reunited with them and rekindling the relationship. This is experienced alongside the endurance of affective registers of grief, pain, loss and sadness that result from a feeling of guilt due to the failure to keep Māori ancestors safe, unviolated, undefiled, but most importantly, alive. Retaining life for Māori is about restoring the *mauri*, the spark of life, and part of this is to create a space of the *Va* (the space where the body activates the *mauri*). Here, this is experienced as the power of life and spiritual connectedness in the present. Seeing Māori culture placed in a cabinet, in an alienating environment, without access to the contemporary life of the *marae* is equivalent to seeing a body putrefied through neglect. Sitting outside of Māori life places their value out of reach and their power deadened. Māori thus see themselves through the cabinet, as artefact and as past. The co-constitution of modernity that *Taonga* are part of, is occluded in the grammars of the cabinet display. Following the deadening of the power of

the artefacts, they are reduced to the past- their role in keeping ancestral knowledge as part of the present transnational nationhood that is *Māori* is erased. Rosanna Raymond articulates this thus: “Looking at *Taonga* that is so familiar, yet very separated from its original place and purpose can be a frustrating and painful process.” (Interview, July 2010) She says:

Woven feathered capes, body adornments of greenstone and whalebone, teeth, tapa cloth, tattooed warriors, an assortment of unnamed gods and useful receptacles, it seems not much has changed since the eighteenth-century presentations for the curios (2008: 285)

Māori time-spaces are turned on their head within the museum display. This is counter to the need for cultural heritage to be a *live* relationship with the past, not one to be displayed outside of Māori stewardship. At the heart of this problematic is what Said (1979) has argued, ‘the one thing the orient could not do was to represent itself. Evidence of the Orient, was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist’s work’ (1979: 283). What is at stake here is not just representational politics, but an account of the affective logics of cultural collections. A true mutually dialogic exchange is necessary to make sense of modern cultural truths, values and practices. To rip Māori away from the articulation and the process of *being-with* cultures produces a denial of core values, and engenders a fissure with Māori cultural memory.

Conclusion

Within the discipline of sociology as in the wider social sciences there is an inherent need for a new critique of the colonial logics of the scientific gaze that looks onto others, making them knowable and translatable. Embedded within academic cultures is an account of knowledge as visual, textual, a category or indeed a system of signification of worth. Some groups do indeed figure their identity politics through the tropes of injury and trauma

(Ahmed, 2000), but what is important here are elements of the affective power of the encounter with “self”, which can be positive as well. Affective atmospheres can be read as an opportunity to align with cultural geographies that are dynamic and self-determined. Sensibilities proffered here act as counter-heritage, one which is intangible, ‘anti-artefact’ and plural in its space-time framing and texture. Acknowledging affective politics at the museum encounter enables a politics *against* symbolic representational practices (Hall, 1997), semiotics and categorisation. In acknowledging the affective politics of encounters there is room for dialogue that is empowering, re-enlivening, and can potentially lead to a re-framing of a postcolonial, post-racial sensibility of curatorship. The account of cultural encounter expressed here is about acknowledging the lingering resonances of imperial ‘ways of seeing’ and re-futing inherited geopolitical hierarchies of race and culture. As Bennett (2007) argues, the work for cultural sociology is to see that realms of *culture* and the *social* are co-constituted thus an evaluation of the categorisation of life-worlds as exhibited in museums. For this to be accomplished there needs to be a disassembling of museum exhibits from static, bounded accounts of ‘cultures’ distinct from each other on the way to open-endedness and multivocality. The project of disassembling the fixed-ness of narratives should engage the dynamic rhythms of *social* meanings, in *spatial* contexts, rather reducing culture to an ‘anthropological constant’ (2007: 37). To disturb these frameworks requires a reflection on the self-perpetuating tactics of cultures of expertise, evidence and on notions of what counts as “knowledge”. Like the cabinet at the museum, academic technologies of knowledge production are themselves out-of-time, built as they are built on values figured through colonial views on capacities and sensibilities with a project of subjugation at heart. They are also out-of-space. Voices of an anti-colonial, anti-racist museology is needed to engender postcolonial pride and stewardship. Museums continue as sites of power. This is despite the promise provided by the ‘virtual

museum’ (Isaac, 2008); White, 1997). In these realms of the virtual, power structures shaping the writing of histories remain (de Certeau, 1988). What makes a difference is the idea that visitors should be in a position to co-curate, ‘the notion of the curator as the sole interpreter, handing down wisdom to a passive public’ (Merriman, 1992: 138). Raymond’s work thinks through constituencies that are formed through diasporic connections, that are threaded over time and space. Raymond has collaborated with archaeologist Dean Sully, and The National Trust on *Hinemihi* a *marae* transported to Britain in colonial times, situated on National Trust land. In this project time-space, authenticity and accounts of the historical past have been disrupted; *Hinemihi* is not considered an object/artefact, but a living being that requires stewardship *in relationship* with her people. *Hinemihi*’s position as an inter-cultural and trans-temporal focus for human interaction is mirrored in the lives of Māori communities living in Britain today, making sense of their own identity and their reciprocal relationships with British culture and people. *Hinemihi* becomes a being, with feelings and with soul, a spirit engendering affective social networks that are *reciprocal*. This acknowledgement enlivens relationships that are critical to her survival as well as the survival of everyday, lived and modern, Māori culture in London. *Hinemihi* is unfixed from category, and of past uses. An approach to the past of communities, linking them to the present through *their* relationships with artefacts (such as *Hinemihi*) is exemplary as it relies on *lived* knowledges, values and is co-constituted with and between Māori and non-Māori. We can then produce and reproduce arenas of knowledge and engagement that truly aim to be postcolonial, post-racial, embodied, international, and accountable to all. The placing of racialized cultures as “alternative”, “indigenous” or indeed “community histories” is problematic and reiterates the power of *minority history*. As Hooper-Greenhill (2013) suggests,

‘in order to ensure survival into the next century museums and galleries must demonstrate their social relevance and use’, and connecting with disenfranchised ‘others’ would be a relevant, and enlivening path to take.

Notes

¹ <http://www.ngatiranana.co.uk/> Ngāti Rānana London Māori Club aims to provide those interested in Māori culture an environment to participate in Māori culture. The guiding principles of Ngāti Rānana are whanaungatanga (togetherness), manaakitanga (looking after one another/hospitality) and kōtahitanga (unity).

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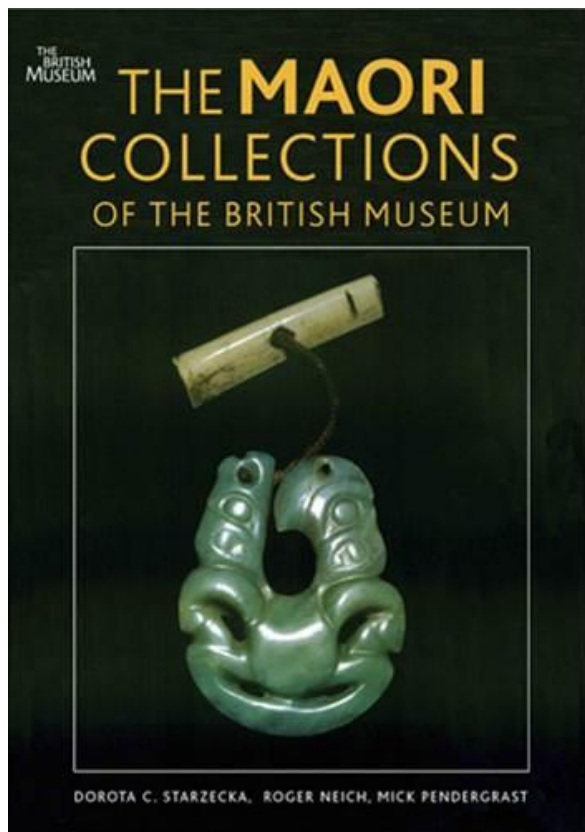
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Figure 1: [Front Cover] The Māori Collections of the British Museum (2010). Edited by D.C Starzecka, R. Neich and M. Pendergrast. British Museum Press: London



ⁱ Rosanna Raymond is an artist, academic, writer and performer:
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/people/staff/honorary/raymond>

ⁱⁱ Ngāti Rānana is the London Māori Club: <http://www.ngatiranana.co.uk/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Their expressive performance in Paris in 2011 evidences their role in re-curating and re-thinking Maori cultures and archive: http://www.nzstudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NukuRaymond_press.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwTrCdtCGYE>